

Humble Advice
 TO
 3
Protestant Dissenters,
 IN A
S E R M O N

Preached at

Wotton-Fits-Paine, in the County of Dorset,
June 25th, 1682.

Occasioned

By a late Order of Sessions read in the Parish-
 Church there.

By B. B. Rector there. *Bind (B.)*

Ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for
Conscience sake. Rom. 13. 5.

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 Lion in St. Paul's Church-Yard, 1682.

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Humble Advice



T O

The Right Reverend Father in God,

VVILLIAM

Lord Bishop of B RISTOL.

My Lord,

I Make bold to dedicate this plain Sermon to your Lordship, because you are my Diocesan, to whom I am accountable for what I preach. And though it doth not presume into your Lordship's Presence because of any Worth in it; yet it begs a little Countenance for the Honesty of its design, which is to convince Dissenters, that it is their Duty to obey the Magistrate in lawful things, and save Ministers the trouble of drawing up any Certificate of their Disobedience; because faithful Ministers can take no Comfort in bearing any Testimony against their People to God or Man's Bar; they had rather give an account of their People with Joy, and not with Griet, for that is unprofitable for them; Hab. 13. 17. I know your Lordship would be glad to hear well of all the People committed to your Charge, and to the end you may hear so of that part of it entrusted with me, I preached and printed this Sermon, fitted to the

To the Right Reverend Father in God, &c.

Capacities of my Dissenting Parishioners, who are plain Country men. My Lord, I hope you will excuse my Boldness, and accept of my weak Endeavour to bring straying Sheep into the Fold, altho it may not have that Success that I could wish. The good Lord increase and multiply his Blessings upon your Lordship, for the good of his Church, that you may continue to do worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.

So prayeth, my Lord,

Wotton-Fitz-Pain,
June 26th, 1682.

Your Lordship's

most Humble and

Faithful Servant,

BENJ. BIRD.

ECCLES.

ECCLES. 8. 2.

I counsel thee to keep the King's Commandment, and that in regard of the Oath of God.

THis Book one calls *Solomon's Sapiential Sermon* of the Sovereign Good, and how to attain it; some stile it his sacred *Retractions*. *Solomon* in his old Age repents of the Vanities of his Youth. Others stile it his *Ethicks*, or, *Traçate de summo bono*, of the chiefest good. In this Book he declaims against the Vanities of the World, declares wherein the Happiness of Man consists, and what his Duty is. In the words of the Text, he touches upon our Duty to the King, or Supreme Magistrate that God hath set over us, and that is, to keep his Commandment, *Ego os Regis observo & Precepta juramenti Dei*: as if he spake this of himself to shew us an Example; אֲנִי־מֶלֶךְ שֹׁמֵר, I, that is, I counsel thee to keep the Mouth of the King, that is, the word of Command that cometh out of his Mouth. Στόμα βασιλέως φύλαξον, keep the Word of the King, i. e. his Commandment.

1. A Duty enjoyed, and that is Obedience to Kings.
2. A Reason annexed, in regard of the Oath of God, because thou hast sworn Allegiance to him, of which Oath God is a Witness and Revenger. *Pemble*. The Oath of Loyalty which the Subjects swear to their Prince. *Diodate*. For though the present Oath of Allegiance was not before the Reign of King *James*, yet there were Oaths devised

B

in

Vulgar.

Monco te ut
observes.

Septuagint in
sacris literis
soma, sciendū
dicitur ipsa or
ratio seu verba
ore prolata.
Scapula.

in former Times, to tie Subjects to their Sovereigns. *Tacitus Rom. Hist. p. 87.*

3. As it is a Reason of Obedience, so also it is a Limitation and Qualification of it; we must obey Kings in the Lord; our Obedience to them must be such as may consist with our Duty to God, *Salvo juramento Dei*; so far as may stand with that Fealty we owe to God; *Servato tamen imprimis jurejurando quo tu es Deo obstrictus.* God is the King of Kings, no Prince must controule him; if he dare do it, in that we must not dare to obey him.

The lawful Commands of Kings ought to be obeyed by their Subjects. I say, the lawful Commands of Kings; for if the Magistrate command any unlawful thing, we ought not to obey; if the Magistrate command, and God contradicts, God being the highest Lord, we must obey God rather than Man, *Acts 4. 19.* But if a Magistrate command nothing but what we may lawfully do, we ought to obey him. This we are ready to yield to all. When we cry up Obedience to Magistrates, we would be understood only in lawful things. If a Magistrate should command me to blaspheme God, to deny Christ, I must die rather than do it. The Primitive Christians were thus dealt with. The Proconsul urged *Polycarp*, saying, Swear, and I will let thee go; blaspheme and deny Christ, and thou shalt be safe: to whom *Polycarp* answered, *Octoginta sex Annos illi jam inserviivi, &c.* Forty-score and six Years have I served him, and he never offended me in any thing, how then can I revile my King? *Euseb.* But blessed be God this is not our case, we live under a Christian King, who is a Defender of the truly ancient Catholick and Apostolick Faith; a Professor of the Reformed Religion himself, and a Countenancer of those that do profess it, according as it is establish'd by Law in this

Pamph.

Biz.

Doct.

Moderatio obsequii quod homines debent potentatibus parendum est, inquit, si non nisi bona Fide & Conscientia, quia non est potestas nisi à Deo; ac proinde ju. non habet Homines ab obsequio avocandi, quod Deus à suis jurejurando exigit, & illi Fide data se exhibituros receperunt. *Full.*

Full.

this Land. And that it is our Duty to yield ready and chearful Obedience to our King's lawful Commands, appears, Rom. 13. 1. *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers. Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, &c.* Tit. 3. 1. *Sponse nempe, non coacte*; freely, and not by constraint. And yet those Magistrates were rather Enemies than Friends to the Christian Religion. How much more cause have we to set chearfully about this Duty, having a King of the same Religion with us, that owns that Christ for his Saviour that we do? *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King, as Supream*; 1 Pet. 2. 13. This St. Peter, the Papists call the Prince of the Apostles, and think the Bishop of Rome succeeds him in his Principality, who pretends that all Christian Princes are inferior to him, and that he hath Power to pull down and set up at his pleasure; and yet St. Peter pretends to no such Authority, and teaches us that the King is Supream.

Dr. wallis in
Titum.

See his Bull a-
gainst Q. Eliz.

1. *Reas.* The King is set over us by God, God hath put a Scepter into his Hand, and set a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head; *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice: By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth*; Prov. 8. 15, 16. that is, by my Authority, they are of my setting up, and by me furnished with a Spirit of Government: *There is no Power but of God, and the Powers that be, are ordained of God*; Rom. 13. 1. *Meminerimus ergo Politiam ipsam seu Magistratum esse rem bonam, divinitus ordinatam; & statuamus hanc Obedientiam a Deo requiri prestandum, tanquam ipsius ordinationi.* Let us know that Government is good and of Divine Institution, and the Obedience that we are to pay to it, is required by God, as to an Ordinance of his own.

Carw. in. loc.

Melancton.

Object. But is not Magistracy called an Ordinance of Man? 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man, &c.*

Aquinas 2.
g. 10. Art. 10.

Ans. The Popish Clergy, who would feign tread the Christian Magistrate under their Feet, and bring Emperours to hold the Popes's Stirrup, and Kings to lead his Horse by the Bridle when he rideth abroad, look upon Magistracy as only an Ordinance of Man. *Dominio & praelatio introducta sunt ex jure humano:* They would pull down Princes to set up their Idol the Pope. Magistracy is called an Ordinance of Man, because Man is the Subject of it, it being born by Man; the Object, it being employed about Men; the End also, the good of Men; the kind or sort thereof left unto the choice of several Nations. Some are governed by Lords, as *Holland*; some by Dukes, as in *Italy*; some by Kings elected, as *Poland, Bohemia*; some by an Hereditary Prince, as *France, Spain, England, &c.* and yet to Monarchy it self, the Consent of Men is either expliciteley or impliciteley required, as Dr. *Haylin* saith. In these respects it is called an Ordinance of Man, but not in regard of the Invention or Institution of it; that is wholly from God.

Geography.

Camdens
Eliz.

2. *Reas.* The King is *Pater Patrie*, the Father of his Country. Magistrates are our Civil Parents, and Children ought to obey their Parents, *Ephes. 6. 1.* Queen *Elizabeth* was wont to say, that she would believe no more Evil of her Subjects, than a Mother would believe of her Children. Good Princes are careful for their Subjects; as their Children; and good Subjects are as obedient to their Princes, as to their Parents. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; *Exod. 20. 12.* Divines that write upon the Commandments, understand, that Obedience to the Magistrate is required in this fifth Commandment.

By Andrews,
Mr. Dod, &c.

3. *Reas.*

3. *Reas.* Magistrates bear the Image of God, they are Earthly Gods, and therefore Disobedience to them is Disobedience to God; as Disobedience to an inferiour Magistrate that acts according to Law, is Disobedience to the Prince (whose Minister he is) in the Person of his Servant. We must honour the Impressions of God upon the higher Powers. There is a Stamp or Impress of the Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Sovereignty of God upon Magistrates; yea, God puts his own Name upon them; *Psal. 82. 6. I have said you are Gods, and all of you Children of the most High.* God hath set them up in his stead to rule over us. *Caryl on Job.*

4. *Reas.* The many Benefits that we receive from them, oblige us in point of Gratitude to pay them the Tribute of Obedience to all their lawful Commands; as God hath set Magistrates above us, so he hath set them up for us: The Magistrate doth protect us from Wrong or Injury, righting us upon those that offer Violence to us, maintaining our Liberties and Properties, that we may sit every one under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree; *They are God's Ministers, attending continually upon this very thing; Rom. 13. 6.* God hath made it their business to take care of their Subjects, and to see that they sustain no Hurt or Damage; and we in requital pay them Tribute, and yield them Obedience. If there were no Magistrates to protect the Good, and to bridle and restrain the Wicked, you should quickly see your Wives ravished, your Houses rifled, your Children sold, and all that you have at the Mercy of the Sons of Violence.

Use of Information. If the lawful Commands of Kings ought to be obeyed; then it is the Duty of the King's Majesties Subjects in this Nation, to repair to their Parish-Churches,

Churches, and receive the Sacrament according to Law, unless we can make it appear that this is no lawful Command. I shall speak to both of these Duties in their order, but first I must answer an Objection made against the Magistrates interposing in this Affair.

Object. What hath the Magistrate to do in matters of Religion? he is only to take care of Civil Concerns, and to protect Men in their Liberties and Properties, and leave them to God as to their Religion and Consciences?

Answ. The Papists and some Sectaries would divest the Magistrate of his Authority in matters of Religion; the Popish Clergy, that they might have it for themselves, and that the Magistrate might serve only for a Hang-man, to execute those they deliver over to the Secular Power. The Sectaries that they might be free to broach their Opinions, and make what Proselytes they can, and none to make them afraid. But yet it is the Magistrates Duty, who is *Custos utriusq; Tabule*, to take care of the Worship and Service of God, as appears by the practise of good Kings heretofore, and by the Promises made to the Church, &c.

1. The practise of good Kings, *David, Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah*, took great care about the Worship and Service of God, and are highly commended for it by the Holy Ghost. What *David* and *Solomon* did, you may read at large in the Holy Scriptures. *Asa* removed all the Idols that his Father had made, and destroyed his Mother's Idol, and burnt it by the Brook *Kidron*, 1 Kings 15. 12, 13. and in so doing, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, (*Verse 11.*)

Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat went out shrough the People from Beer-sheba to Mount-Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord God of their Fathers; 2 Chron. 19. 4. Hezekiah opened the Doors of the House of the Lord, and repaired them: 2 Chron. 29. 3. Josiah set the Priests in their Charges, and encouraged them to the Service of the House of the Lord: 2 Chron. 35. 2. Thus you see good Kings have look'd upon themselves as concerned in matters of Religion, and have acted accordingly, with Applause.

2. The Promises made to the Church, that she should have such Magistrates as should take care of Religion, and of the Worship and Service of God. *Kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and Queens thy nursing Mothers; &c. Isa. 49. 23.* a promise made to Gospel-times. Now if Kings are to perform the part of Parents to their Subjects, then they are to *bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord: Eph. 6. 4.* and therefore are concerned about the Religion of their Subjects.

Hoc accidit,
quum Deus
sefe per Evan-
gelium orbi
Terrarum pa-
tefecit. Calv.

3. Magistrates have a Charge to kiss the Son, *Pfal. 2. 12:* that is, to do Homage to Christ, and promote his Interest; to mind our Religious, as well as our Civil Concerns; and therefore we should pray for Kings and all that are in Authority, that God would incline their Hearts to do their Duty, *That under them we may live a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty: 1 Tim. 2. 2.* that they may countenance Religion and Godliness, as well as Justice and Honesty. I hope this may serve to convince you, that the Magistrate hath to do in matters of Religion. I shall now speak to both the Duties injoynd, the neglect whereof the Magistrate is now about to enquire into.

1. To come to Divine Service in your Parish-Church, which includes the whole Worship of God at such Solemnities;

nities; for the Divine Service is not over until the Blessing is given. Now if it be not unlawful, then it is your Duty to obey the Magistrate in this thing. I never met with any that have asserted it unlawful; divers famous Non-conformists have asserted the lawfulness of it; *Mr. Hil-desham*, though * four times silenced, yet makes it our Duty to come to the beginning, and stay till the end, † and says farther, No wise Man misliketh the Prayers that are used in our Church-Assemblies, no, not the reading of Prayers, no not the reading of many Prayers neither, &c. || *Mr. Tombes* in his *Theodulia* asserts the lawfulness of hearing the Ministers of the Church of *England*. * *Mr. Baxter* of *Formes* of Prayer. († A Case of great and present use, that holds it lawful to hear the Now Conforming Ministers, who are re-ordained, and have renounced the Covenant, and some of them supposed to be scandalous in their Lives.) A great deal of pains in answering the Objections of the scrupulous is taken by the Author of it.

* Fuller's Eccles. Hist.

† Lectures on John 117.

|| Lect. on Psal. 51. 810.

* Cure of Church Divis. p. 176, &c.
† Mr. Nye.

Object. The main thing objected is, That Parish-Ministers do not live according to their Doctrine, but are scandalous in their Lives. Those that have least Acquaintance with them, are very forward to speak thus of them.

Ans. 1. This is not said of all, but only some Parish-Ministers, and the same is said of some Nonconforming Ministers: and why should you run from some scandalous Ministers, to hear others? what Reason is there for that?

2. You should first have used some means to reclaim these Men, and upon their incorrigibleness, you should have complained them to the Ecclesiastical Governour, before

before you had proceeded into ways of Separation.

3. Very few Parish Ministers are so scandalous as some of you report them to be; there are some of you that can invent Lies where you bear a Prejudice, and others that are too forward to give Credit to Slanders.

4. Though some Ministers are scandalous, yet it may be your Duty to hear them; for it is not unlawful to hear a scandalous Minister, as long as it is God's Word, and not his own, he preaches. Truth is blessed from the Lord for its own sake, and his whose it * is. *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's Seat; All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their Works, for they say and do not:* Matth. 23. 2, 3. The mixtures in Sermons are nearest, the Irregularities of their Callings the next; the Sins of their Conversations farthest from their Doctrine, and therefore have less Efficacy at such a distance to prejudice it: [Mr. Nye's Case as afore.]

A second Duty required by Law, the neglect whereof is to be now enquired into by the Magistrate, is the receiving of the Sacrament according to the usage of the Church of *England*. Now here perhaps the Scruple may be greater, because many that come to Divine Service, do refuse to come to the Sacrament. I shall therefore endeavour to answer the Objections that some make.

Object. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord: 1 Cor. 11. 27.* now we are loth to be found Murtherers of Christ, and to eat and drink our own Damnation (ver. 29.)

Ans. Must this be always your excuse? do you intend to be still unworthy? is this any Excuse at all? whose

C

fault

fault is it that you are unworthy, God's or yours? Are your Lusts dearer to you than a Sacrament? will you part with Christ rather than part with them? It is a great Sin to turn your backs upon a Sacrament, and no excuse, but a Sin, to be unprepared for it: and what will the end of all this be? read and tremble, *Marth. 22.* Faithful Ministers are willing to do their best, to prepare you to be Worthy Communicants.

Object. There is not that care taken to keep out the unworthy and the scandalous that there should be: And we cannot communicate with such, nay, we are charged with such, *no not to eat, 1 Cor. 5. 11.*

*Rubrick be-
fore the Com-
munion.*

Ans. 1. Ministers have power to keep scandalous Persons from the Sacrament, provided they give notice of it to the Ordinary by such a time.

2. If Ministers are remiss and negligent in their Duty in this thing, this is not thy fault but theirs, and thou shalt not answer for them.

3. There were many scandalous Persons at the Sacrament in the Church of *Corinth*, *1 Cor. 11. 21.* and yet *St. Paul*, who complained of the Abuse, did not blame others for receiving with them, nor labour to promote a Schism in that Church because of it.

4. Other Men's unworthy receiving cannot be prejudicial to thee, if thou art a fit Communicant; *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation, not to thee, but to himself, 1 Cor. 11. 29.* his Blood be upon his own Head.

5. Whereas we are bidden *not to eat with such*, it cannot be meant at the Lord's Table, where you have no Authority to keep off others, no Liberty to refuse to

come your selves, but at your own Tables and at theirs, where you are at your own dispose.

1. The eating that is here forbidden with a Brother, is allowed to be with an Heathen: but 'tis the civil eating that is only allowed to be with a Heathen; therefore 'tis the civil eating that is only forbidden with a Brother.

2. The eating here forbidden, is for the Punishment of the nocent, not of the innocent; but if religious eating were forbidden, the greatest Punishment would fall upon the innocent, the Godly, who must keep a spiritual Fast, because of other Men's Unworthiness.

Jenkins Jude.

Object. We differ from other Reformed Churches, and the Disciples of our Lord, in the Gesture of receiving, which is Kneeling, that seems to countenance the Popish Doctrine of Transubstantiation, as if we did adore the Bread and Wine.

Ans. 1. Our Church hath cleared her self from this Imputation, by declaring, that this order of Kneeling is only for a Signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ given in this Sacrament to all worthy Receivers, and that thereby no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood.

See the Declaration at the end of the Communion.

2. There being no particular Gesture prescribed, the Churches of Christ take liberty to appoint such a Gesture for their Members as they think meet; the *French* and *Dutch* stand, and sit, we kneel; and if a Man hath a good spiritual Appetite, there will be the less ado about the

Gesture. If I am prepared for the Communion, and were in *France* or *Holland*, I would not wrangle with them about the Gesture of receiving.

3. It is not certain what Gesture Christ and his Disciples received in; if they received leaning, none of the Reformed Churches receive in that manner: besides, they received it at Night, and in an upper Room; and yet we conceive, we are not tied up to these Circumstances of time and place, but may receive at Noon, and in a lower Room; and why may it not be as allowable to differ from them in Gesture, as in Time and Place? And therefore notwithstanding what is objected, it appears to me lawful to frequent the Parish-Church, and receive the Sacrament there; and if it be lawful, it is a Duty; and I hope, Men of tender Consciences will consider of it, and be fearful of offending God, by disobeying the Magistrate's lawful Commands.

F I N I S.

